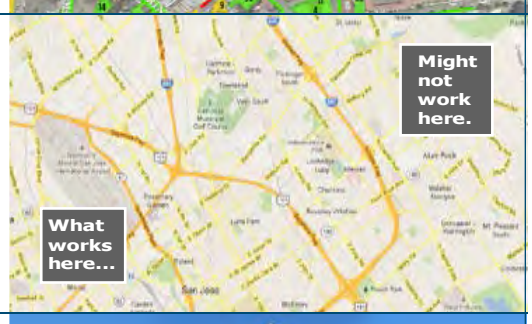
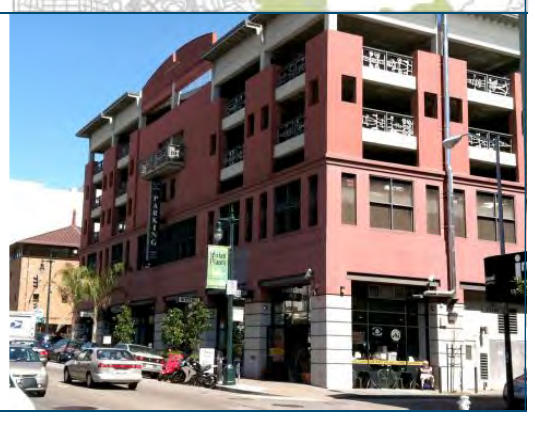
EVALUATING PARKING STRUCTURE PROPOSALS CONTEXT SENSITIVE FRAMEWORK

How can cities and transit agencies evaluate whether a parking structure is the best strategy for their community, and if so how to "right-size" it and implement appropriate policies?

Parking structures can provide important access to downtowns, town centers and transit centers, support local economies, and improve the quality of neighborhoods. However, if not properly evaluated they can be built in places and in ways that have significant negative impacts, to both budgets and livability. The following is a six-step list to guide local jurisdictions and transit agencies as they evaluate, plan, and design parking structures.

Step	Description	
Step #1 What are you trying to accomplish?	***Define goals and objectives*** Examining goals and objectives helps stakeholders better articulate the rationale for access and parking policies, including consideration of a new multi-million dollar parking facility and other potential or complementary options.	
Step #2 What parking and other access modes currently exist and how are they used?	***Conduct an existing conditions assessment*** An evaluation of the current local parking and access situation is critical in establishing a shared understanding of the key issues. A survey of parking utilization in the area, for both public and private facilities, should be conducted and the findings considered before proceeding with planning for a new parking structure. Note other access modes as well.	
Step #3 Do parking requirements and access policies support the goals and objectives?	***Establish an appropriate policy framework*** The cost, design, and role of a parking structure should be determined by the policy framework of the local jurisdiction, transit agency and other key interests. It is important that parking requirements and policies are adopted that reflect local conditions and goals.	
Step #4 What would it cost to build this parking structure?	***Document full parking structure costs*** Parking structures cost a great deal to construct, at least $25,000 per space, and also involve design, operating and maintenance costs, land opportunity costs, and livability/environmental impacts. Analyses should include an evaluation of the "net" cost per space if the proposed structure is to replace existing parking. Analyses should include pricing options and revenue sources.	
Step #5 How could a new structure be coordinated and balanced with other access modes?	***Consider context, include multiple access strategies*** A new parking structure is only one piece of an access solution. A new structure in a downtown or at a transit station will likely improve access for motorists, but may not support transit, bicyclist, and pedestrian mobility. Could existing access barriers be bridged by providing new pedestrian, bicycle or transit facilities or services at a lower cost than providing some of the parking for local residents? What size structure is beneficial and cost effective when combined with other access improvements?	
Step #6: How can you design a structure and policies that are appropriate for the context?	***Design the structure to maximize the benefits*** If a parking structure is to be built, it should be planned and designed in a physically beneficial manner; located, designed, and potentially wrapped with active uses so that it adds value to the local community and supports transit. Access policies should be re-visited to make the best use of the structure, through pricing, shared parking policies, and support for alternative modes, e.g. bike parking, carshare.	

The information in this brochure is detailed in MTC's *Parking Structure Technical Report* (2012).

This report and additional resources can be found at mtc.ca.gov/parking

For more information contact Valerie Knepper at vknepper@mtc.ca.gov or 510.817.5824.